

**ABSTRACT**

A ruggedized, reliable and sealed connector assembly for the a network, such as the Ethernet, the telephone network, and other applications, includes a housing assembly having push-on, auto-latching connection mechanism that may be used to seal and protect an industry-standard connector. The illustrative connector assembly comprises a first housing assembly for housing a first connector half, such as a jack, and a second housing assembly for housing a second connector half for mating with the first connector half, such as a plug. When the first housing assembly mates with the second housing assembly, the housed plug and jack also mate, in a sealed, protected environment. A locking sleeve is rotated against a spring force during initial insertion of the second housing assembly into the other, and permitted to rotate back into a locking position upon completion of insertion, thereby locking the first housing assembly to the second housing assembly and the first connector half to the second connector half. The first connector half (i.e., a jack) may be removably snapped into place in the first housing assembly and the second connector half (i.e., a plug) may be removably snapped into place in the second housing assembly. The second housing assembly may includes a means for disabling a latching lever arm on a plug component to allow the disengagement and unlocking of the connector assembly by rotating the locking sleeve, rather than requiring manual disengagement of the first and second connector halves.